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ABSTRACT

Since principals are chiefly responsible for school improvement and effectiveness, professional development opportunities must be provided throughout their administrative careers. Research has identified certain behavior patterns causally related to principals' effectiveness. Since the summer of 1984, the North Central Regional Staff Development Group has developed and sponsored an induction program for principals based on instructional leadership. One school system used a research-based questionnaire asking school administrators and other professional staff to identify topics administrators need to know from a selected list of skills and behaviors. Generalizable results of what principals wanted to know and what staff wanted principals to know were then incorporated into a systematic principal induction program. This paper outlines the program, which also comprises recommendations from the Maryland Commission on School-Based Administration Report (1986). Eight goals are summarized and 18 criteria identified for the two-year induction process. Since its inception, the program has developed three strands: technical assistance, collaborative instruction/school improvement, and collegial support. Two figures and nine references are included. (MLH)

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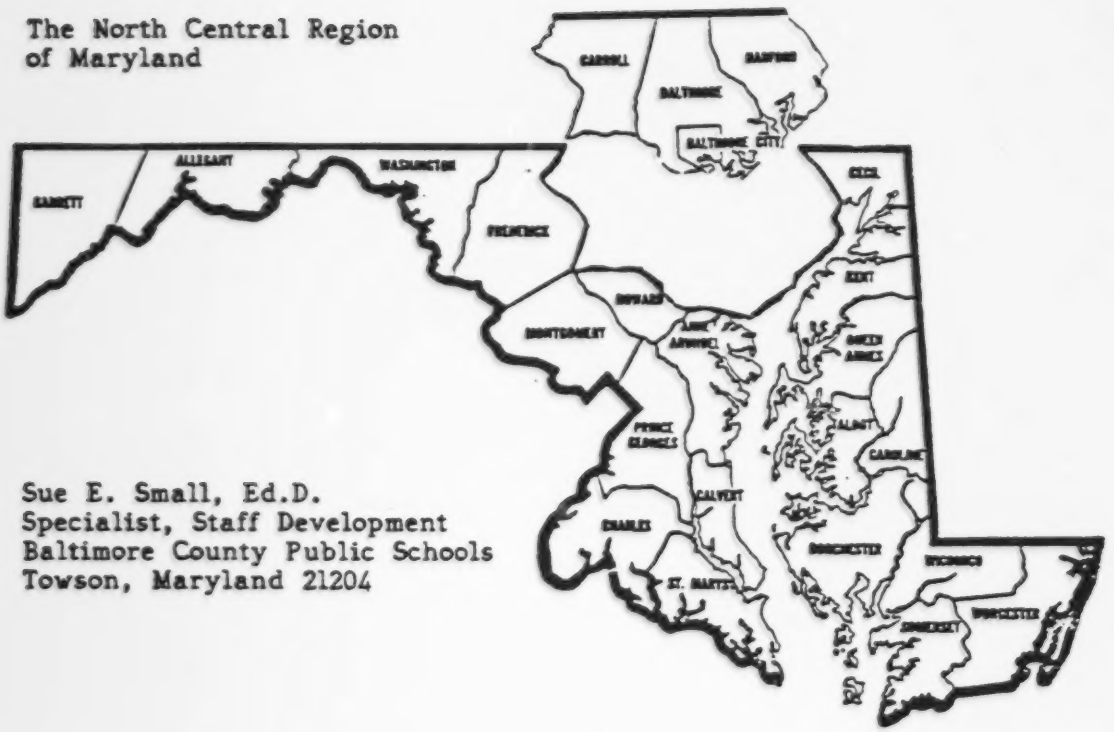
IMPROVING INSTRUCTION THROUGH PRINCIPALS' INDUCTION PROGRAMS

in

The North Central Region
of Maryland



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IMPROVING INSTRUCTION THROUGH PRINCIPALS' INDUCTION PROGRAMS

AN OVERVIEW

The ultimate aim of professional development for principals is better learning for the student. Since it is widely recognized that the principal is the key person who influences school improvement and effectiveness, it is essential to provide for the professional development of these individuals. Career-long growth and development is fundamental to the professional improvement of the principal and to the school being served.

Although there is ambiguity related to sequential learning and the specific skills which are causally related to the effectiveness of the principal, certain behaviors have been identified. Further, while specific "how to" directions for developing principal effectiveness have not yet been proven (Manasse, 1982) it is increasingly important to test and develop the skills it is believed that principals need (Cawelti, 1982; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Silver, 1981; Yukl, 1982).

The behaviors and skills that are indicators of effectiveness are viewed as "increasingly effective to the extent that they facilitate necessary teacher growth and thereby indirectly influence student learning or impinge upon other factors known to effect such learning" (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982, p. 310).

This recognition of the importance of the instructional leadership role of the principal prompted the North Central Regional Staff Development Group to sponsor an induction program focused on instructional leadership. Since the summer of 1984, a professional development program for beginning principals has evolved.

Content and desired models of delivery for the professional development of school-based administrators were investigated in a recent study in one of the school systems in the North Central Region (Small, 1985). Using the school and principal effectiveness research to develop a questionnaire and interview schedule, the study asked school-based administrators and other significant personnel (Superintendent's staff, other central office staff, administrative interns and teachers) to identify topics administrators needed to know more about from the selected list of skills and behaviors which may have effects on student learning.

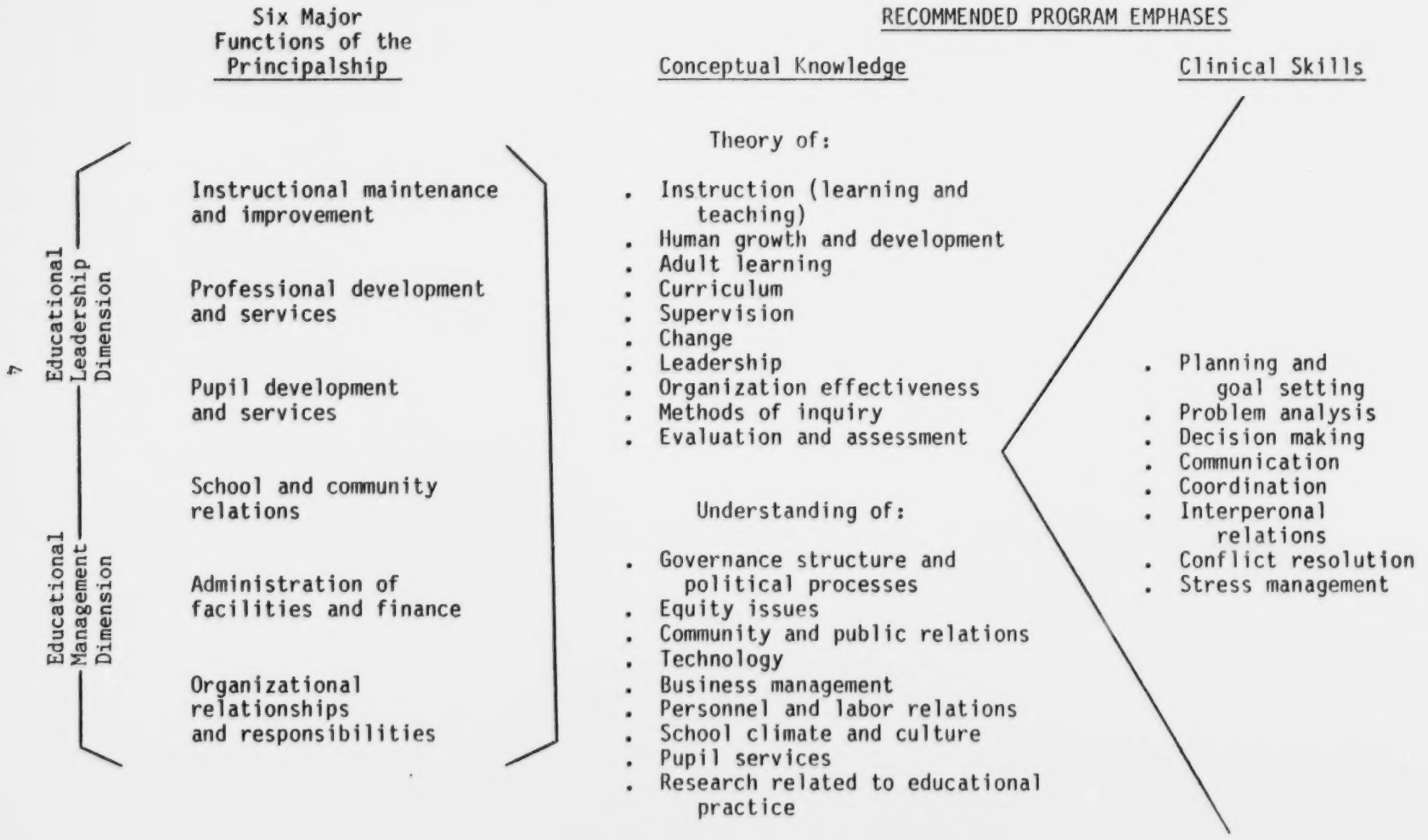
It was found that principals wanted to know more about theories of instruction, managing their time for instruction, staff development for teachers, planning and goal setting, and problem analysis. The Superintendent's staff wanted principals to know more about goal setting for the school and for teachers as well as about the evaluation of teachers (Small, 1985). These results were thought to be generalizable and it seemed important to include in principals' professional development programs those topics desired by principals themselves as well as those identified by the Superintendent's staff. This information, along with recently published information regarding a statewide effort to improve the effectiveness of school based administration, has been incorporated into a systematically designed program.

The Maryland Commission on School-Based Administration Report (1986) identified local school districts as having primary responsibility for professional development practices. Further the report defined the major functions of the principalship and made recommendations regarding the conceptual knowledge and clinical skills necessary to perform those functions. It seemed appropriate for the school districts to continue in the

collaborative professional development activity as well as to provide for system-specific offerings. The areas recommended for program emphasis in the Commission's report, Improving the Effectiveness of School-Based Administration in Maryland (1986) have been incorporated in the Principals' Induction Program. The Recommended Program Emphasis of Preparation Programs as included in the commission report is shown is Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

THE RECOMMENDED PROGRAM EMPHASIS OF PREPARATION PROGRAMS OFFERED BY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



From Improving The Effectiveness of School-Based Administration in Maryland, 1986.

Not only has training and support for the principal become a recognized and highly valued need in the State of Maryland, but demographic information—related to enrollment increases, early retirement of current administrators, and decreased numbers entering the profession--suggests there may be an influx of new principals nationally. Estimates of administrative turnover by 1990 have been as high as 70 percent (Peterson, 1986). It can be assumed that at least more people will enter school based administration in the future than has been true in the past.

This period of entry into the profession of school administration has implications for the initial work of the beginning principal and related training and support needs. Beginning principals have identified problems and issues in three areas: (a) problems with role clarification, (b) limitations on technical expertise, and (c) difficulty with socialization into the profession and the system (Daresh, 1986). Therefore, it is necessary for school systems to initiate induction programs in collaboration with institutions of higher education to meet the needs of the beginning principals and to establish norms for school improvement and increased instructional effectiveness.

The purpose of the Principals' Induction Program is to provide professional development activities and support systems that will get the beginning principal off to a good start in the right direction--that of educational leadership. The program is based on the research findings of school effectiveness, principal effectiveness, teacher effectiveness, adult learning, concerns of beginning principals, and on the underlying beliefs about the professional development of beginning principals.

The Principals' Induction Program has been evolving since 1984. First designed as a one year program, it was extended to include the first two

years of the principalship in a systematic, continuing induction process. Three strands have been identified within the program: technical assistance strand, collaborative educational leadership/school improvement strand and the collegial support strand. The organizational structures, program description and criteria for replicating the professional development program for beginning principals will be presented.

MAJOR UNDERLYING BELIEFS OF THE PROGRAM

A major purpose of the Principals' Induction Program is to improve the way principals are welcomed into the unique position of the principalship. The program is based on the following beliefs and underlying assumptions:

- The principal is the key person who can influence school improvement and effectiveness.

- School improvement is related to communicating high expectations, providing technical assistance and monitoring results through performance based observation and analysis of instruction.

- The professional development of beginning principals is the first step toward recognizing that school systems have a major responsibility to encourage, support, and provide for the continued learning and growth of principals.

- Beginning principals have concerns which are both similar to and different from more experienced principals.

- Induction programs need to provide for the concerns specific to beginning principals (role clarification, technical and procedural assistance, and socialization to the profession) as well as to provide for those concerns central to school improvement.

- Induction programs serve to demonstrate school system responsibility for continued professional development of principals.

- The professional development of beginning principals must involve a multi-dimensional effort of providing high quality staff development and support for principals and, at the same time, providing required implementation of performance-based observation and analysis of instruction.

- Professional development programs for beginning principals should include content and process skills primarily related to the educational leadership functions of the principalship to reinforce the role expectations of principals to emphasize school improvement.

- The structures, delivery systems and norms developed for the induction program for beginning principals should

include characteristics of adult learning and effective staff development.

- Collaboration and networks for continuing professional development need to be included in a comprehensive, on-going, program reflecting consideration of the needs of both individuals and school systems.

MAJOR GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The Principals' Induction Program represents a two year entry period beginning at the time of appointment to the position and includes three strands: technical assistance, instructional leadership/school improvement and collegial support. Eight major goals have been established for the Principals' Induction Program. These goals are embedded in the criteria identified as necessary to the program design. A summary schematic of the goals is found in Figure 2.

Goal 1

Development of content and processes for selected educational leadership functions of the principalship

The role and function of the principalship was described by The Maryland Commission on School-Based Administration to include both the educational leadership and the management dimensions for the school (Commission Report, June, 1986).

The educational leadership dimension includes functions of the principal acting as an agent of change to influence others to commit their

energies and efforts to the achievement of organizational goals and school improvement objectives. From the conceptual knowledge identified as needed by principals in the commission report, selected areas were identified for emphasis in the collaborative strand over the two years of the Principals' Induction Program: instruction, supervision, leadership, and change. The educational management dimension included selected knowledge and skills incorporated in the technical assistance strand which is managed by each local school system.

Goal 2

Development of specific knowledge and skills for increasing and assessing teaching effectiveness

A specific goal of the program is to develop knowledge of theories of teaching and learning with an underlying assumption that instruction is a series of decision-making opportunities. It is intended that the program will provide training to develop the principals' skills in increasing and assessing teaching effectiveness.

Goal 3

Development of content, structures, delivery systems and norms to support the beginning principals

The content of the program as well as structures, delivery systems and norms for behavior should provide technical assistance and procedural guidance in areas necessary to functioning in individual school systems. In addition, expectations for new principals need to be related both through formal presentations by members of the Superintendent's staff and through informal discussions with more experienced principals. These expectations are specific to school systems and are provided in the technical assistance strand.

Structures to develop collegial support systems are needed to maintain planned development rather than haphazard "gripe" sessions. These support systems form a third strand in the Principals' Induction Program.

Goal 4

Development of behaviors and skills for school improvement

Certain behaviors and skills have been suggested as those principals need in order to move toward school improvement. Of that large number of behaviors and skills, those related closely to the areas of instructional supervision, assessment of instruction, planning and goal setting, problem analysis and interpersonal relations were identified as priorities for the Principals' Induction Program. These skills are included in the collaborative strand and required for the Principals' Induction Program.

Goal 5

Development of a training model to facilitate instructional improvement

The Principals' Induction Program is an evolving program in that it has the flexibility for change to meet the needs of individuals within the program. Yet certain content is maintained to focus on instructional improvement through performance based observation and analysis.

The training model and techniques used for the beginning principals are perceived as having generalizable elements that can be transferred to programs for the professional development of experienced principals and to provide the bases for staff development programs for teachers.

Goal 6

Continuing collaboration and support of institutions of higher education, the Maryland State Department of Education, and local education agencies

Collaborative efforts begun during the incubation period of developing programs needs to be continued through implementation and evaluation. The Principals' Induction Program has a goal of continuing collaborative arrangements with a more clear understanding of the various organization responsibilities for the professional development of principals. The Maryland Commission on School-Based Administration has clarified the local school districts as having the primary responsibility for professional development practices (1986, p. 1.4). It is a goal of the Principals' Induction Program to continue collaboration for the acquisition of conceptual knowledge and clinical skills beyond preparation programs through inservice professional development opportunities in school systems.

Goal 7

Development of professional program development criteria and a process for program evaluation

Criteria for professional development programs for principals are needed to provide guidelines for those who will be developing programs. In accordance with characteristics of adult learning, effective staff development practices and desired models of delivery, criteria have been developed. The criteria include the areas of planning, delivery, management and evaluation of the program.

Within these areas, the criteria describe three levels of program expectations: program design, criteria and anticipated outcomes.

A process for testing the criteria and evaluating the program is being developed. The instrument to be used in the process has been designed and is currently being tested for validity and reliability.

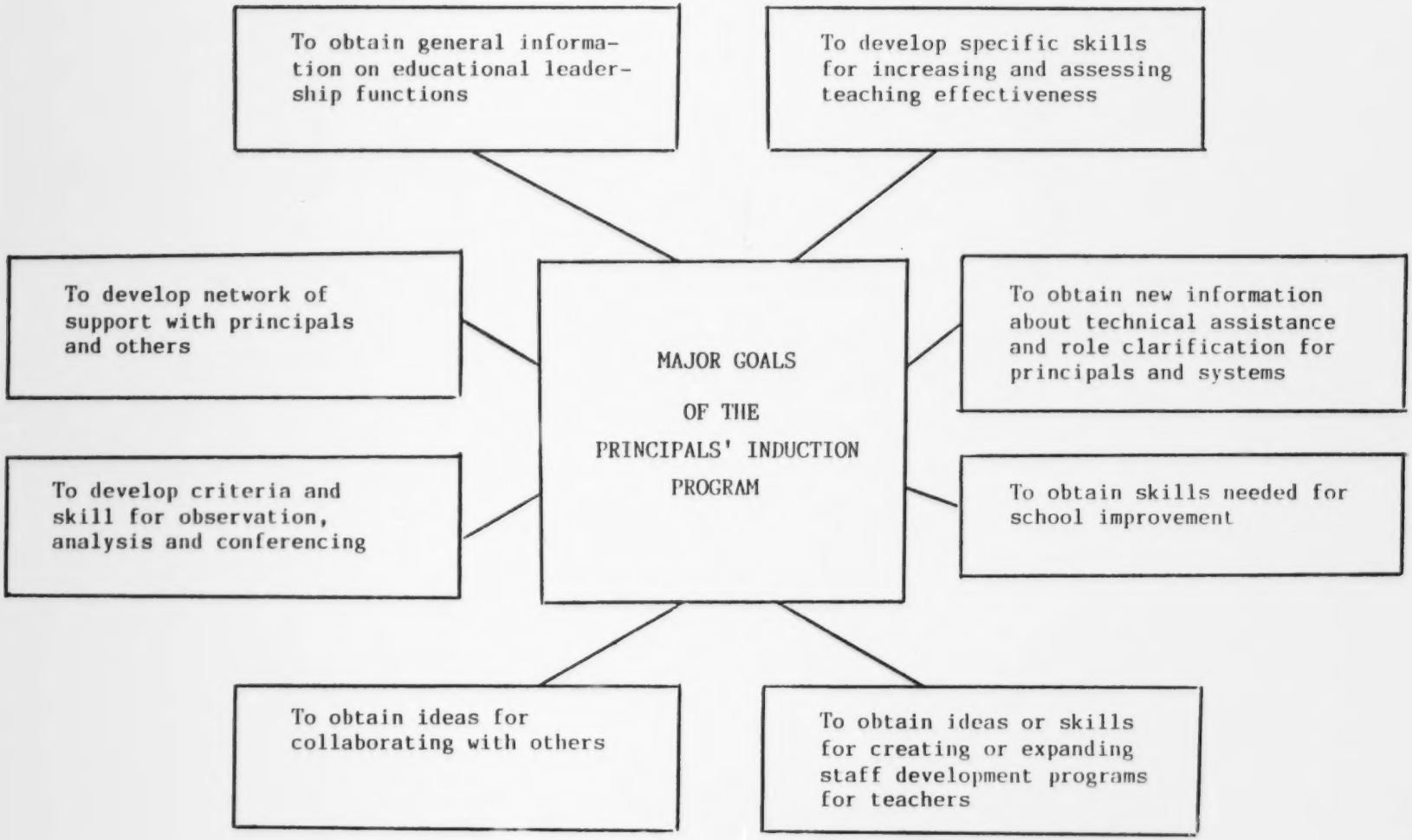
Goal 8

Development of networks for continuing individualized professional development

Although the two year period of induction draws to an end for each beginning principal, the need for professional development continues. The eighth goal of the Principals' Induction Program is to build networks and systematic processes for the principals' continued development. Specifically, administrative networking teams or collegial support groups implemented in the first year develop into coaching partnerships where coaching on specific skills occurs during the second year. The nature of individualized professional development plans and the coaching relationships serve as foundations and structures for the continued development of the principals. It is anticipated that many principals who have completed the program will choose to be mentors for beginning principals.

The eight goals described here are briefly shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2


To obtain general information on educational leadership functions
To develop specific skills for increasing and assessing teaching effectiveness
To develop network of support with principals and others
MAJOR GOALS OF THE PRINCIPALS' INDUCTION PROGRAM
To obtain new information about technical assistance and role clarification for principals and systems
To develop criteria and skill for observation, analysis and conferencing
To obtain skills needed for school improvement
To obtain ideas for collaborating with others
To obtain ideas or skills for creating or expanding staff development programs for teachers

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

The North Central Region of Maryland is considered to include the local school districts of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Harford County as well as the institutions of higher education and non-public schools serving the area. As a part of the mission of the Maryland State Department of Education, regional staff development groups are identified and encouraged to work collaboratively to meet the needs of the school districts toward the improvement of instruction.

The North Central Region Staff Development Steering Committee identified a need common to all constituent groups, that of training new school administrators. In the spring of 1984, the co-chairs of the North Central Group, Dr. Jane Hammond of the Maryland State Department of Education and Dr. Anthony G. Marchione, Deputy Superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools, guided the efforts of the group to provide an induction program modelled after the Maryland Professional Development Academy Institutes. A coordinator of the program was appointed, Dr. Sue E. Small, who worked with the members of the North Central Group to implement the program.

Since 1984, the principals' induction process has evolved into a systematic, on-going program of professional development. The program coordinator, also named chairperson of the Beginning Principals' Subcommittee, is responsible for continuing collaborative efforts as well as program design, development and implementation.

The Beginning Principals' Subcommittee reports to the North Central Region Staff Development Group Steering Committee. The subcommittee is comprised of representatives from each of the four local school systems

and representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education, institutions of higher education, and beginning principals. Each school system representative is responsible for chairing a task force within the respective system to guide the situation-specific needs and technical assistance represented in one of the three strands.

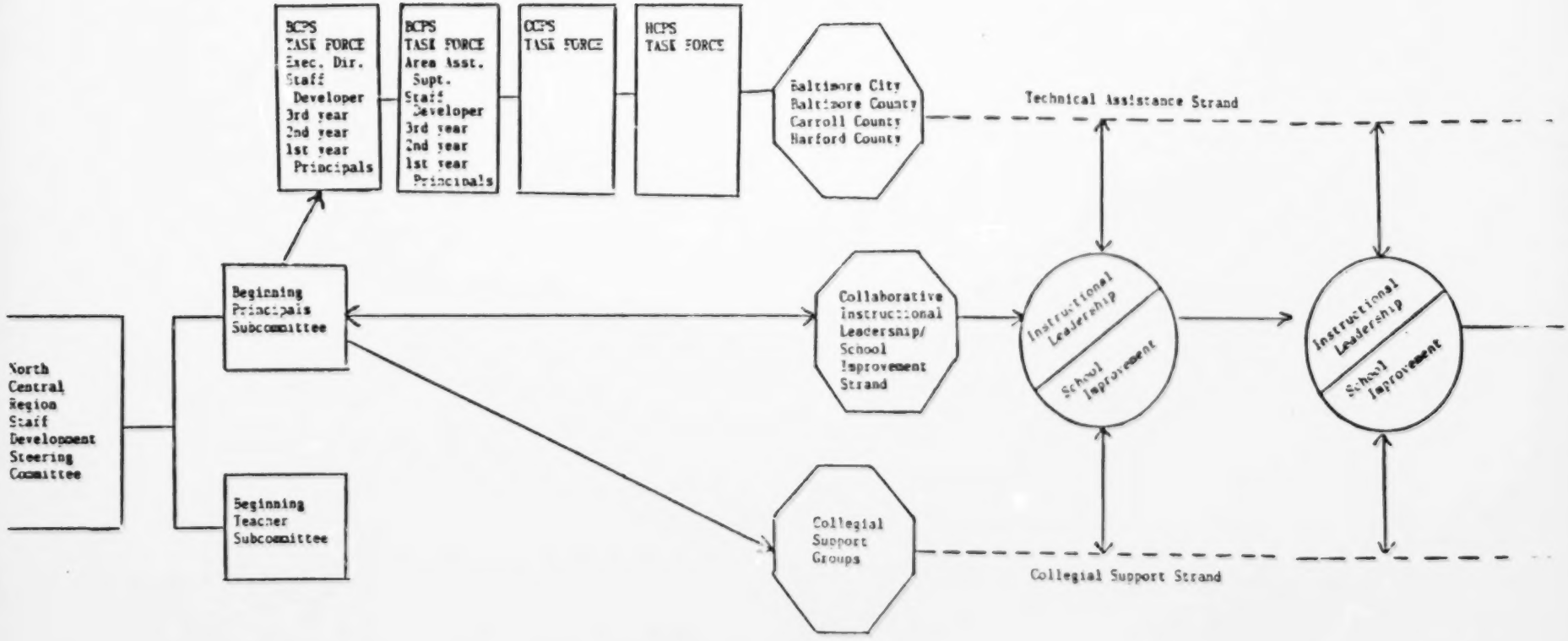
The collaborative instructional leadership/school improvement strand is developed by the subcommittee and provided for new principals in all systems of the North Central Region. It is this strand which is described in the current document.

A collegial support strand is given structure and is formally used as a part of the instructional leadership/school improvement activities. Yet it is conceived as a broader, more lasting network for support and problem solving throughout the careers of the principals. The collegial support strand is shown in the diagram of the North Central Region Principals' Induction Model. (See Figure 3.) Philosophically, within the Principals' Induction Program, collegial support is viewed both as permeating all activities with colleagues from higher education, other school systems, and the State Department of Education, as well as being the "bottom line," a separate strand of processes for program implementation.

The organizational structure of the Principals' Induction Program provides for collaborative program strands as well as school system specific strands. More specific descriptions of the two part content for the collaborative strand will be provided.

Figure 3

NORTH CENTRAL REGION PRINCIPALS' INDUCTION MODEL


BCPS TASK FORCE Exec. Dir. Staff Developer 3rd year 2nd year 1st year Principals
BCPS TASK FORCE Area Asst. Supt. Staff Developer 3rd year 2nd year 1st year Principals
OCPS TASK FORCE
HCPS TASK FORCE
Baltimore City Baltimore County Carroll County Harford County
Technical Assistance Strand
North Central Region Staff Developoent Steering Committee
Beginning Principals Subcommittee
Beginning Teacher Subcommittee
Collaborative Instructional Leadership/ School Improvement Strand
Collegial Support Groups
Instructional Leadership
School Improvement
Instructional Leadership
School Improvement
Collegial Support Strand

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The collaborative instructional leadership/school improvement strand is delivered in the context of a pre-institute planning session, a three-day residential institute held in the summer, and monthly follow-up sessions throughout the first year. The second year program continues with a pre-institute planning session, a two-day residential institute in the summer, monthly follow-up sessions and scheduled coaching visits on school sites.

The content and processes for the collaborative strand and the collegial support strand of the Principals' Induction Program have been designed as a spiral curricula to build on acquired knowledge and skills. Each program has separate, but conceptually linked goals and the follow-up sessions reflect increasing knowledge and skill levels.

The major foci of the first year program are knowledge of teaching and learning, theories which underlie increased teaching effectiveness, and identifying mission and goals for school improvement. Goals for the Principals' Induction Program I as well as an overview of the summer institute and monthly follow-up session topics provide information about program content. A cross reference of program content was developed to relate the content of the first year program with the functions of the principalship and the required knowledge and skills identified by The Maryland Commission on School Based Administration (1986).

Major foci for the Principals' Induction Program II are knowledge and skills in instructional supervision (aimed at assessing teaching effectiveness through the instructional development process), systematic observation, and conferencing strategies. Included also, and central to

the collaborative strand of the program, is emphasis on school improvement and the process of moving along the continuum to reach school improvement goals established in the first year. A cross reference guide of second year program content with areas of emphasis for knowledge and skills were developed.

As the program has evolved certain elements and areas of emphasis have remained constant based on research derived needs for principals. These areas of emphasis are instruction, leadership, and support. They are incorporated in the design of the three strands. Flexibility is an important aspect of the program to incorporate the needs and interests expressed by each group of beginning principals.

As a tool to plan, monitor, evaluate, and, perhaps, to replicate the program of principal induction described here, criteria for the program were developed. These criteria have served as a foundation for the design of the two year induction process and may be used to design future training models for other professional development programs for principals and other professional staff.

CRITERIA FOR PRINCIPALS' INDUCTION PROGRAMS

The criteria for the two year induction process have been divided into four program design areas: planning, delivery, management, and evaluation. Each area is further divided into criteria and anticipated outcomes for participants.

Eighteen criteria have been identified for the four design areas with a total of 50 anticipated outcomes for principals during the two year

program. While the criteria are perceived as necessary, they may not be sufficient for all professional development programs for principals. Yet these criteria will serve as guidelines for the subcommittee to use in future development and as a part of the evaluation process for the program. An interview schedule will incorporate opportunities for participants to report on their levels of use and achievement of anticipated outcomes. Additionally, an instrument to observe and assess the the program has been developed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Principals' Induction Program was intended to be a program designed to help beginning principals get off to a good start by providing collegial support, opportunities for collaborative problem solving and direction toward role clarification of the principal as an instructional leader. Since its inception in 1984, the program has evolved to contain three strands: technical assistance, collaborative instructional leadership/school improvement, and collegial support. Program design, criteria, and cross referencing with the areas of emphasis for knowledge and skills in school-based administration have become important additions aimed at program improvement.

The Principals' Induction Program has been described by participants as "extremely beneficial," "definitely an asset," and "an invaluable experience." As one principal stated, "I looked forward to every session. I am convinced that my effectiveness as a principal has been greatly enhanced because I participated. I hope that this group's interactions

might be allowed to continued on some basis. Our coaching team plans to continue" (Action Plan Survey, 1985 and 1986). The program has been viewed as "practical" by many participants although conflict around being away from the school site was cited as causing stress for some.

In conclusion, both those responsible for the design and development of the program and those participating in its implementation perceive its value. Both the school system representatives in the North Central Group and the principals themselves have expressed a need to continue the program as a means for getting principals off to a good start and improving instruction at the school site.

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